



Waters Upton Parish Council

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Oaklands, Waters Upton, Telford TF6 6NP
Telephone / Fax 01952 541939 or 07813 788094
E mail: clerk.watersupton@parishcouncil.work
www.watersupton.gov.uk

Vat Registration No. 815 7684 02

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
11th July 2025

FAO [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

PROPOSED MERGER OF WATERS UPTON PARISH WITH ERCALL MAGNA PARISH

On behalf of Waters Upton Parish Council, representing the residents in the villages of Waters Upton, Crudgington, Great Bolas, Cold Hatton and Meeson and hamlets of Shray Hill, Longswood, Sleaford and Sandyford, we wish to raise strong objections to the recommendation included in the latest consultation document.

Although the two Parishes share a boundary along the A442, there are no other services or facilities that they share. Children from High Ercall, Rowton and Ellerdine travel to High Ercall as the nominated primary school and those from Crudgington, Waters Upton, Cold Hatton, Great Bolas etc. use the nearby Crudgington School.

Each Parish has its own Village Hall and Shop, also churches. There is no coming together of the two areas when considering services and facilities.

Each Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan. The engagement with the communities throughout the production of the document and the consultation at each specific stage, including the final referendum, proves strong local community cohesion.

Waters Upton Parish Council, covering the villages and hamlets named above, have worked together since its formation in 1988 to improve facilities for the residents, without increased precept requests. Two of the most significant assets of the Parish are the Parish Centre and the Village Green. The residents fund-raised to be in a position to purchase land as part of a Section 106 agreement with the landowner and developer. The money was not raised through the precept, but by individual families and friends. The community working together for such a project shows strong community cohesion. Similarly significant fund-raising has taken place to provide toilet and kitchen facilities for Great Bolas Church. The new development at Crudgington Fields has brought new families to the Parish in support of the school and the residents have already joined in with community events held in church and on the Village Green and the children attend Crudgington School.

When looking at the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and other related guidance on Community Governance Reviews, it is clear that the review must reflect local community identity and be effective and convenient. The sheer size of the proposed new Parish would be contrary to that requirement. The distance from Poynton to Meeson or from Sleaford to Sandyford is immense – it would be unreasonable to expect members of the 'new' Parish to represent such a large dispersed area as volunteers with limited hours.

The recommendation also suggests a reduction in the number of Parish Councillors. Whilst we can accept that there is a suggested number of residents per Councillor, in rural areas the distance must be taken into consideration. In an urban area, you could find one or two streets with the suggested number of residents, in our rural area you would have to travel a significant distance to find the same number. A reduction in Councillors would not be beneficial for the representation of the people. Similarly, when looking at the proposed number of Councillors within the suggested Wards of the new Parish, for Waters Upton to have only 5 representatives but High Ercall to have 7, plus an 8th in Roden would be vastly unfair when it comes to democratic decision-making. This reduction in the number of Councillors would also result in a reduction of the effectiveness of the ability for them to engage with and represent residents.

The Parish Councillors have engaged with local residents throughout the process. The Village Hall was packed at the last PC meeting, when this appeared on the agenda.

There is no evidence of support from within the Parish for this merger.

We were grateful that the Committee had agreed an extra drop-in consultation event for the rural areas of the Borough, which took place at Waters Upton. You will, no doubt, be aware of the strength of feeling from residents in the rural areas, but in particular from Waters Upton Parish, as they can see no benefits from the merger and have only mentioned to the Parish Council their concerns and reasons to oppose the recommendation.

We have not canvassed, but we have encouraged as many residents as possible to respond to the consultation. This has been difficult for some, as many do not use computers or the internet. We did distribute some paper copies on request, but without the detail available on the telford.gov.uk website, many found filling in the form to be difficult. We have suggested that they write their thoughts direct to the Review team.

It was pleasing to know that the Boundary Review Committee had confirmed, at one of its meetings, that their decision would be based on local residents' opinions. We have been contacted by Ercall Magna Parish Council and it appears that both our authorities are strongly opposed to the recommendation.

We would respectfully request that the decision of the Committee is the status quo. At this time, there are no advantages to the local communities of such a merger. There are, however, many concerns and disadvantages.

As recommended, a further review in 10 – 15 years may have a different outcome and we would welcome the opportunity to be involved in further consultation at that time.

Kind regards

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